

**CUMBRIAN STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION (SACRE)**

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 26 MARCH 2026
CUMBRIA HOUSE, CARLISLE, AND VIA TEAMS**

Committee A: Other Faiths/Denominations

Present: Sheila Gewolb, Sarah Hutchinson, Karen O'Donoghue (Chair), Rashi Manemi, Laura Simmons, Wendy Ridley, Jaswinder Singh, Jane Yates.

Apologies: Mohammed Dhalech, Morgan Tebb-Rogers, Michael Watmough

Committee B: Church of England (CE)

Present: Richard Cox

Apologies: Sarah Harrison, Laura Watson

Committee C: Teachers Associations

Present: James Douglas, Bernadette Little

Apologies: Brian Eaton, Katherine France

Committee D: Local Authority

Present: Janet Battye (W&F), Elaine Lynch (Cumberland), Chris Southward (Cumberland)

Apologies: John Murray (W&F)

Co-opted

Present: Carolyn Reade

Apologies: Rebekah Ackroyd, Vicky Bunter

Vacancies:

- Baptist
- Orthodox
- Pentecostal
- Salvation Army
- Unitarian
- United Reformed

Clerk to SACRE

Sue McGaw

LA Support:

Present: Rachel Laverack (Cumberland), David Hodgkiss (Westmorland & Furness)

1.Welcome and Introductions

Apologies for absences and substitutions, as above. The meeting was quorate. KO'D thanked everyone for attending and welcomed new members Sarah Hutchinson, Catholic Representative and Laura Simmons, Humanist Representative, they introduced themselves. Welcome to Rod Ireland, Community Cohesion Officer from Westmorland and Furness – item 8 on the agenda.

2.Matters arising not covered on the agenda

None

3.Minutes of the previous meeting on 13 November 2025

The minutes were agreed

4. Feedback - working group meeting (am)

- Welcome back to RL who has been on sick leave since January, following an operation.
- Discussion - some CPD on assemblies and SMSC have had to be cancelled due to low numbers and we are also experiencing low numbers for the SACRE/RE Conference in June. This has been put down to the cost of the conference at £169 per delegate with schools struggling with their budgets. We will explore other ways of running the conference in future maybe holding it every 2 years and changing the venue to reduce costs.
- Pennine Learning document – discussion on updating guidance on assemblies, to be passed on to schools. Pennine Learning document could be shared through the Newsletter as a starting point for discussion in schools
- Development Plan – additional meeting took place in January discussing anti-racist/community cohesion. Looking to embed SACRE and strengthen our links with other organisations. Jayne Williams, Senior Adviser for Learning Improvement Service in Cumberland also attended this meeting along with Lesley Nixon Senior Adviser W&F. JW shared additional information about links/work with Community Cohesion Officer, Richard Quinn.
- Looking for additional Muslim representative from the south of Cumbria.
- Curriculum and Assessment review. Vanessa Ogden statement was positive about the importance of SACRE. Draft programmes of study out for consultation in June. SACRE will focus more on monitoring and assessment, and more involvement with community cohesion.
- Sixth form survey only 8 schools have responded – extend deadline and issue a reminder.
- GCSE/A level results were discussed which have been added to the Annual Report 2024/25. It was pointed out that there has been a reduction in the number entering RE but there has also been a reduction in school numbers, also noted that an increasing number of schools are offering philosophy and sociology at A level. BL who works in a Catholic school said Yr12 take up much better. But more students are opting to take up apprenticeships eg (Gen11) for Sellafield rather than going to sixth form.

5. Updates from Local Authority

Jayne Williams, Senior Adviser for Learning Improvement Service in Cumberland who attended the working group meeting in January spoke of their links with Richard Quinn Community Cohesion Officer in Cumberland. Their Newsletter is being shared with schools. Some school clusters are working with Anti Racist Cumbria.

Richard Quinn and his colleague Lynsey Crossthwaite had been due to attend to take part in item 8, but unfortunately had to cancel. Notes provided on Hate Crime – see attached.

JB – W&F are working on their inclusion strategy which will be published in the summer, she will pass a copy to SACRE, when it's available.

BL has been trying to get hold of Mohammed Dhalec to do some training with NAHT – JY agreed to contact him about it. Action JY

6.SACRE links with other organisations

Hindu civilisation exhibition has been taking place at Tullie Museum this week, some of our SACRE members have been involved with some more attending a community event this evening. Two schools have visited the event Bridekirk Dovenby and Richard Rose Central Academy.

7.Carlisle One World Centre

Adrienne Gill gave a talk on the role of the organisation and shared a Powerpoint – see attached. Their office is in the Lanes Centre. Involved in many areas including Fairtrade projects, poverty issues and bridging faith communities. They work locally and are available for school assemblies. Some of our SACRE members have joined events.

Cynthia Waggah – Chairperson of Cumberland Sanctuary Network and co-founder of the Afrikana Centre in Botchergate, Carlisle. They hold community events and their aim is to support immigrants to integrate into life in Carlisle. They bring people together, and create awareness of the lives of immigrants and the difficult journey they have to get somewhere safe. They are also working with Churches Together.

CS wanted to express how important the work of both of these organisations are. They both rely on grants and voluntary contributions.

8. Community Cohesion

Rod Ireland Community Cohesion Officer introduced himself and gave a brief talk on his role in Westmorland and Furness council where their aim is to make people feel connected. They want to hold lots of events to create safe spaces for discussions and stop misinformation. They have also been involved with the challenges facing the opening of the new mosque in Dalton.

9.Local and National Updates

Already distributed before the meeting. JY thanked for all her time putting this together.

SG mentioned the Jewish Culture Month – 100 events being run all over the country as a celebration of British Jewish contribution, culture and community. 16 May – 15 June 2026.

10. North West RE Hub

SG has been attending these meetings for the last 10 years, JY also attends now. The hub formed in 2014 to bring together SACREs in the north west region to share good practice with Cumbria playing a big role in it.

- NASACRE statement - Government commits to supporting SACREs – see attached.
- Follow on from the DfE Curriculum and Assessment Report, Dr Vanessa Ogden has led a task and finish group looking at the future of RE. Draft programmes of study are due to be published in June with final implementation due in September 2028.
- SACREs will be valid in the future but will no longer need to produce an Agreed Syllabus, more of a monitoring role. RS Ambassadors from Queen Katherine School took part in a national discussion with Dr Ogden on the future of RE in schools, JY shared a copy of QKS's recent newsletter (attached).

11. SACRE Newsletter

JY will put in events mentioned today. Members asked to send anything they would like included to SMC. **Action All**

The next newsletter will be sent to schools when they return after the Easter holidays (week beginning 13 April). JY encouraged members that are school speakers to send any links from social media covering any school event that they have been involved in.

12. Arrangements for future meetings

The next meeting will be held at The Queen Katherine School in Kendal. JY is trying to organise a session with sixth form students who haven't chosen to do RE. If possible, to also hear from their RS Young Ambassadors.

13. Member updates

- KO'D has been elected as a delegate to the Baha'i National Convention taking place in Yarnfield, Staffordshire at the end of April. Baha'is have no clergy instead there are elected bodies that are elected annually. Elections are conducted by secret ballot and there are no candidates and no campaigning. Any Baha'i over the age of 21 can be elected.

14. AOB

None